



Professor Merkt, the Chief of the German Spy System.

(Continued from Last Sunday)

CHAPTER VII.

ONE afternoon late in 1916 the liveried lackey who stands at the curb outside the imposing Hotel Shoreham, in Washington, opened the door of a limousine that swung up to the sidewalk. A slender form, muffled rakishly in rich sables, followed a daintily groomed foot out of the car.

The pompous hotel attendant was much impressed, not so much by the expensive furs and trim boots—as by the poise and exotic beauty of the new guest, the bustling vivacity of the French maid, who emerged from the car behind her, and the distinguished appearance of the foreign looking man who was her escort. The flunkey was convinced the young woman must be a person of importance.

And so she was—of importance to Germany. For it was the most valuable and successful of Germany's women spies, Mme. Storch who had arrived in the United States. Her companion was the infatuated Count de Beville.

Mme. Storch chose to be registered as the "Countess de Beville," and was assigned one of the most elaborate suites of apartments in the hotel. Her reasons for being known at the capital as the Countess were afterwards explained. Anticipating future need to leave the United States, she wished to establish in Washington the identity under which she had travelled on the passports procured for her by the traitorous official of the French Secret Service, Captain, Ladeaux. These passports had been issued to "the Count and Countess de Beville," which helped to ward off suspicion, as the Count's family was one of the most loyal in France. On later visits to Washington Mme. Storch invariably reassumed this identity. When she wished to leave the United States these passports were used without question.

Count von Bernstorff, the German Ambassador, had been notified of the coming of Mme. Storch to the United States. Special instructions for her had been forwarded to him from Berlin, it is believed. She was received by him at a secret rendezvous the day after her arrival. It has been announced that Mme. Storch received from the German Ambassador as her first payment for her expenses in this country \$25,000. Later payments averaging \$1,000 a week continued and, forwarded by Berlin after the United States entered the war, have been traced by the government. The channels through which these remittances were sent have not been fully divulged by the authorities, except that the payments were made to Mme. Storch frequently by Mme. Charlotte Nix, said to be one of the German paymasters in this country.

Count de Beville always remained in the background when Mme. Storch began to use her beauty and ability to lure men as a trap for those persons in Washington whom she wished to meet. These included the attaches of the legations—the neutral as well as the allied diplomats.

She Transfers Her Intrigues from Washington to New York

Mme. Storch's experience of the undercurrent of official and army life was international. She thought to find in Washington that frivolous, reckless gaiety so familiar in the capitals of Europe. In Paris, Petrograd and London young and pretty women hold courts of their own. The custom, she discovered, had not been imported to the sedate and dignified capital of the United States.

She decided a more profitable field for her espionage and plotting would be in New York, which, she was told, was the real hub of the nation's social as well as financial activities. Before she left Washington, however, she succeeded in building the foundation for later intrigues. Among the diplomatic attaches who succumbed to her charms, it was been authoritatively announced, there was at least one who made her stay at the capital worth while. "Mme. Storch easily succeeded," said the Department of Justice, "in communicating with the enemy without the knowledge of the censor." Her reports from this country were forwarded to Germany in the mail bags of a neutral legation.

In New York Mme. Storch established herself in one of the most costly suites at the Hotel Waldorf. She allowed herself to be known under her own name, the Count de Beville engaging apartments elsewhere. Immediately after this country declared war the Waldorf became a popular meeting place for officers of the

Mme. Storch—Vampire and German Spy

READERS of this page are already familiar with the history of the career of Mme. Nezie Storch, one of the most valued and highly paid spies in the German Secret Service, as it has been told from week to week. After six years of successful activity in all the great capitals of Europe, Mme. Storch was trapped recently in the Biltmore Hotel, in New York City, by agents of the United States Department of Justice.

Her childhood experiences in the harem, her years of gay life among the profligates of the most licentious society in Europe and her establishment in Paris by the German Foreign Office in an expensive setting of servants, equipages and admirers were narrated in previous chapters. Her enlistment of the pretty dancer, Mlle. Mata-Hari, as a spy and the latter's execution by a firing squad; the debauchery of Mlle. Susy Depsy and this young woman's tragic fate as a spy; her intrigues with Raisuli, the Moroccan bandit, and the tragic deaths of two of Spain's proudest noblemen, who had become her lovers and dupes, her sinister activities in Petrograd and then England, were also related, and a further chapter is added to-day.

different armies of the allies detailed to this country upon war missions, diplomats and special commissioners from France, Italy, England and Russia, and important civilians engaged in war work.

In returning to her own name when she appeared in New York and abandoning her identity as the Countess de Beville Mme. Storch at once disclosed her desire to leave no trail behind along which she might be followed surreptitiously. The Countess de Beville, should occasion arise to suspect her, had disappeared completely from Washington.

When, later, the agents of the government did seek to trace the Countess de Beville from Washington to New York, they lost her completely at the doors of the Hotel Shoreham. They could not even find a taxi driver who had taken her to the train nor a porter who had transferred her baggage.

When she had been followed at last to the Waldorf it was found she had again disappeared leaving no clues behind. She had moved to the Biltmore Hotel and registered there as Mme. Nezie. She covered her tracks so effectively that she appeared to be completely lost in the big city, and the hunt for her had to begin all over again.

The Exquisitely Luxurious Existence of the Arch-Vampire

At the Waldorf Mme. Storch's maid, Marie, was in constant attendance upon her. She indicated to the management which of the floor servants—stewards, maids and errand boys—pleased her most, and insisted upon these favored ones being assigned to perform her services. With the hotel florist she placed an order that fresh clusters of orchids and violets be placed in her reception room daily. Shortly after her arrival she engaged a private limousine, with a chauffeur and coachman. It was one of her whims that her coachman should be taller than her chauffeur—it was her whim, too, that both the chauffeur and the coachman should have been previously employed in important families.

In the many drawing rooms of the palatial Waldorf there always are interesting gatherings of persons from almost every corner of the world, as well as men and women of more restricted fame. The Count de Beville, who called frequently at Mme. Storch's apartments was in a position to identify many persons of distinction. Apparently he could command from mysterious sources letters of introduction to virtually any one whom he desired to meet. Mme. Storch's acquaintance was gradually enlarged through the efforts of the Count. The latter never obtruded himself. When he had placed a new acquaintance, a financier, a munitions broker, a foreign contractor or a military official at ease with the fascinating Mme. Storch, he promptly withdrew behind the horizon, leaving her to use her wiles as she might see fit.

There is very little record of Mme. Storch's proceedings during the days that immediately preceded this country's declaration of war. Apparently she was moving cautiously. Yet her plans took shape early, for she began to render important service to Germany almost immediately after war was declared.

During the Summer of 1917 and later Mme. Storch frequently visited Washington, where she found ways of establishing friendly relations with Spanish attaches, with whom she could talk of their beloved Madrid, and through them the allied officers and agents who were swarming into that city.

These acquaintances were extended to New York. Elaborate entertainments, with the young Nezie as the hostess, began to take place at the Waldorf. Many of these parties assumed some of the characteristic of those which had made the young Turkish beauty famous in Paris, Madrid and Petrograd. A score of hearts were

lost to her, and, with the infinite skill which was hers alone, she deftly played one heart against another in the game she had undertaken.

In the meantime Mme. Storch was learning, from confidences innocently reposed in her by the men she captivated, much military information which this country desired to be secret from Germany. She learned of activities at Washington not made public outside of governmental departments. Through the mail bags of the neutral embassy, as the Department of Justice has announced, this information was quickly forwarded to Berlin.

A statement issued recently by the Department of Justice, which has charge of ferreting out the German spies in this country, best describes the success of Mme. Storch in marshaling her acquaintances for whatever service she desired of them.

"Mme. Storch mixed in a dozen different circles of society at the same time," say the assistants of Chief Charles De Woody, of the Department of Justice Investigation Bureau. "Her many affairs of the heart were mere cloaks for her dangerous German intrigues."

"While we were investigating her activities we would obtain clues which were, apparently, absolutely at cross purposes. We would find her associating with one group of persons and then, while we were investigating this group, we would learn from other sources that she was the centre of an entirely different company. More than once, when we were on trails that should have led directly to her, it appeared that the trail must lead to two or three different women."

"Finally we narrowed all trails down to this one remarkable young woman, who was as much at home in the officers' mess of an interned German ship at Porto Rico as in Peacock Alley in the Waldorf; as able to fascinate a Paris apache as a royal prince; who was familiar with the lobbies of almost every important hotel in the world."

Two extremes, in the friendships of Mme. Storch were the general manager of a huge Western manufacturing plant which had been given over to the government and a humble mechanic's helper in a gyroscope factory in Brooklyn. The general manager had given his services to the government for \$1 a year. The mechanic's helper earned \$17 a week. But both the products of the great Western plant and the gyroscope factory were of important bearing upon the preparation and improvement of America's war munitions.

New and Wealthy Additions to the Storch Circle.

Not long after this country began to play its part in the war the Count de Clermont, who had been a follower of Mme. Nezie through Europe, and Mme. Charlotte Nix appeared in New York. They arrived together from Cuba, but Mme. Nix occupied apartments at the Hotel Netherland, while de Clermont leased an elaborate apartment at No. 44 West Fifty-eighth street. Mme. Storch held many of her secret meetings with persons who were dangerous to the United States in the apartments of Mme. Nix and de Clermont.

The government has traced the payment of huge funds to Mme. Nix by Bernstorff and other German agents in this country. It is believed Mme. Storch turned her dupes over to Mme. Nix when the use of large funds became necessary.

The Count de Clermont emerged from Germany shortly after the war began, attaching himself to Mme. Storch and Mme. Nix. In the gay night life of New York he posed as a member of the French army commission.

Count de Clermont and Mme. Nix became close friends of Mrs. Hugo Reisinger, daughter of Adolphus Busch, the wealthy German brewer. Mrs. Reisinger is one of the wealthiest German-Americans in America. A wireless plant was found in her New York home after the govern-



With consummate daring Mme. Storch drove to the Hotel Shoreham, in Washington, and registered as the "Countess de Beville"—Almost next door to the White House and the State Department and Bureau of Justice this German spy boldly and openly established herself.

ment's ban on private wireless plants had been issued. Twice since the arrest of Mme. Storch Mrs. Reisinger has been summoned to appear before Department of Justice officials.

Mme. Storch was warmly received in the homes of the rich and prominent families of known German sympathies. The ease with which she procured introductions to such persons, some of them of great social influence, astounded the government.

It was early in 1918 the State Department at Washington was notified by the allies that Mme. Storch had come to America, and that if the former slave girl could be captured in the plotting which France and England were sure she would be engaged in the prize would be a great one.

At this time the War Department had just been aroused to the presence in this country of a dangerous band of women spies, who, with unlimited funds mysteriously forwarded from Berlin, moved in official circles and with powerful social connections and unlimited opportunities for intrigue and observation of government secrets, seriously menaced the country's preparations for war.

When the government's agents took to the trail of Mme. Storch and her confederates they soon struck the track of this band of women spies. It was easy to suspect them, but hard to catch them at their work. Each woman, apparently, was acting wholly by herself, without associates. All of them were of more or less striking personality. Some were unusually beautiful and of high social position. And each seemed to have her especial field allotted her.

Not all of this band has yet been rounded up. The government agencies were seriously handicapped until the Congress, at the instigation of President Wilson, gave the President and his assistants the authority needed to deal promptly with women who were suspected of enemy activities. Among those who were gathered in after the government began its efforts to trap Mme. Storch were Mme. Nix, who is believed to have been one of Germany's most trusted agents in this country, and Mme. Marie K. de Victoria, a handsome young woman, who is said to have been active in fomenting Irish trouble.

Mme. Nix is the wife of a German army officer of high standing. She was sent abroad by the German Intelligence Office in 1913, and it was at this time she began to appear in the background wherever Mme. Storch was engaged in her plots. She was found at the fashionable Hotel Netherlands, in New York. France advised this government of some of Mme. Nix's activities abroad, and when confronted with this information she admitted having received, re-

mittances from Count Bernstorff and funds forwarded. It was Mme. Nix, officials say, who distributed women spies employed in the United States.

Mme. de Victoria, who the government the source permitted her to occupy a at an exclusive Long Island this country almost a year ishly, and numbered among many prominent persons. Mme. de Victoria came to the from Germany, and reported commander of the German tered the United States as spiracies in this country Ireland. It was from this Mme. de Victoria received money which enabled her to give whims, and, at the bribes among those whom spell of her intrigues. That she had spent \$40,000 previous to her arrest.

The Amazing and Impudent Use of Women by Germany

Such of the history of the government has revealed is an indictment upon the thoroughness with Intelligence Bureau prepared for spying missions abroad German Secret Service in was quite beautiful, the daughter of the Prussian army, had married and longed for adventure, called, however, and could speak of Germany.

She was enrolled by the Bureau at Heidelberg for a guages. When she had completed she was sent to Zurich, Switzerland, where she gave a series of university lectures on the art of diplomacy, that she mingle with officials and politicians of various capitals of Europe.